

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, I was recently quoted as saying something that Sikhs, Muslims, and other Americans facing harassment and violence in this country took as offensive. I am sorry for any distress my statement caused, and I want them to know that I do not approve of any harassment or violence against any American. All I intended to say was that if a person fits the established profile of a terrorist, that person should expect to be looked at closely by airport security, given the atrocity of September 11.

Many Sikhs are being subjected to harassment due to their beards and turbans, which are required by their religion. Americans of the Muslim faith are also receiving harassment. Sikhism is an independent, monotheistic, revered religion. It is not part of any other religion, although Sikhs are sometimes mistaken for Muslims or Hindus. There are 21 million Sikhs in the world, most of whom live in the Punjab state of India. Approximately 500,000 live in the United States; and most are naturalized or American-born citizens. Most have contributed to all walks of life. Most of the people who wear turbans in this country are Sikhs.

There are many reasons Sikhs come to America, but mainly they come seeking freedom. To persecute them only weakens American unity at a time when our country is under attack.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to let the Sikhs, Muslims, and other Americans who are facing harassment and violence know that I do not condone such acts, that I stand shoulder to shoulder with them, and that I am on their side.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICANS FACING UGLY THREATS AT HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, as America mourns its dead and prepares to launch a global war on terrorism, some Americans are facing additional ugly threats here on the home front, and they are not from foreign terrorists but, regretfully, they are from fellow citizens.

Since the attacks on New York and Washington last week, many Arab

Americans, Muslim Americans, Sikhs, and other Americans of South Asian heritage have become the targets of terrible bigotry and violence based solely on their faith, their heritage, or their choice of traditional clothing.

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Americans of just about every religion and ethnic heritage lost loved ones in this terrorist attack. At least five Sikh Americans were killed in the World Trade Center, and one a convenience store owner named Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot dead last week in Phoenix by an angry gunman calling himself a patriot. Other Sikhs are facing harassment and humiliation in our airports, and every American should deplore this backlash. It is morally repugnant.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Indian and Pakistani Americans died in the attacks, too; and they have become targets of retaliation in the aftermaths. In Dallas, a Pakistani Muslim grocer named Waqar Hassan was shot dead in a hate crime on Saturday.

In New Jersey, businesses owned by Indian Americans have been spray painted with crude epithets, warning them to leave town. Such intimidation is reminiscent of the KKK or Nazi Germany. It has no place in modern America, and all of us must stand with our neighbors in the face of such ignorance and hatred.

I am reminded of the remarks that were made on the floor of the House last Saturday morning between 12:45 and 2 a.m. in the morning when the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) said on this floor in a comment or remarks that she made on the resolution, we had to condemn this kind of bigotry, that she was locking arms that weekend with religious leaders in her community, rabbis, ministers, priests, imams and others, and walking through the streets of her community in solidarity against this kind of repression and intimidation.

Mr. Speaker, mosques and temples have been vandalized, business owners shot and killed, school children taunted, and women attacked with stones and knives. As we have just heard from the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. COOKSEY), in this House a colleague referred to the head covering some Sikhs or Muslims wear out of respect for God as a diaper, and his spokesman went on to say that all turban-wearing airline passengers should be taken aside and questioned.

Mr. Speaker, this runs directly against the very ideals that make our country great. It runs against the ideals of equality of tolerance of diversity and, yes, our own democracy. We are a Nation built by immigrants, a Nation that is stronger, not weaker for the many people and cultures who proudly call it home, and we must stand united as one people in this difficult time and this time of crisis.

So I say to my friends and colleagues here in the Chamber and across Amer-

ica, when this happens, join with your brothers and sisters of different faiths and races and nationalities and ethnicities and bind together and show your support for those who have been singled out unjustly.

America will prevail against terrorism, and we will prevail not just through the strength and the courage of our military but through the enduring strength of our most cherished principles. Only if we stand by our ideals and our neighbors will we successfully defend the Nation that we love.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFazio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE FOR MILITARY RETIREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the people tonight about the terrible tragedy that occurred a week ago Tuesday, about the terrible loss of life for not only people who serve in the military at the Pentagon, the folks that worked at the World Trade Center, the people on those airplanes, but the firefighters who lost their lives trying to save the lives of others. I think it has caused us all to reflect and hopefully appreciate more those people who work every day to look out for us.

It also brings to mind the importance of rewarding those people who serve us, treating them well, paying them well, giving them the best possible equipment because as the President spoke last night, they will be called upon in the very near future.

One of the promises that has been made to those people for decades, certainly since World War II and in the Army recruiting those years all the way up to 1991, was a promise of free lifetime health care if they served their country honorably for 20 years or more in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform my fellow citizens that because of the failure of an agreement between the Department of Defense and Medicare those military retirees who were hoping to take that benefit to a military treatment facility will probably be turned away on October 1.